OFFICE AUTOMATION: A TOOL FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN WORK DELIVERY BY OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT (OTM) GRADUATES IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA
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Abstract
This paper examined office automation as a tool for quality assurance in work delivery by Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey method. Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts from Business Education Department, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo. Test re-test method was used to determine the reliability coefficients of 0.85. A total of 360 Office Technology and Management graduates selected from public and private organizations in Oyo and its environs formed the population of the study. The sample of the study consisted of 108 graduates of Office Technology and Management which was selected using simple stratified random sampling technique. The data collected from the respondents was analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings shows that quality assurance is important to the effective delivery of office work by the OTM staff and equally training and purchasing of required software could serve as a strategy for the adoption of office automation in an organization. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others, that all tertiary institutions in Nigeria that offer Office Technology and Management should lay more emphasis on the use of automated devices. Equally, secretaries should not entertain fear that an automated device will displace them but rather, they should see it as something which has come to assist them to do their jobs in order to improve their efficiency and productivity. Employers should also send their secretaries for further training on the use of the computer among others.
Keywords: Office Automation, Quality Assurance and Office Technology and Management

Introduction
The term office automation generally refers to the use of integrated computer and communication systems to support administrative procedures in an office environment. Automated office systems represent structured methods of handling business text processing and communication through an integrated network that may include word processing or Microsoft word for generating correspondence. Electronic message systems are applied for person-to-person communication, teleconferencing services, facsimile transmission, electronic filing systems, on-line calendar systems, and links to corporate files and outside services (Lucas & Olson, 2016. Jatain (2013) also defined office automation as computer-based information systems that are new and expanding very quickly.

Advances in technology are rapidly changing today's modern business around the globe and have seriously affected every aspect of the office. The effects are generally felt in science, commerce, industry, education, politics and particularly, in the business world. These new technologies have facilitated new business procedures from the traditional office of yester years to the electronic office. Nwogwugwu (2002) asserted that the introduction of sophisticated telecommunication equipment, computer and word processors, information technology machines coupled with the new management techniques have changed old work habits, thereby resulting in complete job re-designation and acquisition of new skills. Osuala (1998) observed that the most common office equipment before the office revolution were typewriters, telephones and filing cabinets. All these provide the means by which the three main information activities are carried out namely document production, communication and filing. During that time office work was dull, slow and labour intensive. According to Osuala, (1998) these three traditional technologies are still very much part of office life, but the electronic office has introduced a number of innovations which complemented or replaced them. Etonyeaku (2009) noted that secretaries in the organizations of yester years were dealing with papers, worked with manual machines, relied on postal services for external communications and kept office records in the cabinets. These technological innovations demand new skills, attitudes and the development of new professional and intellectual concepts among secretaries.

Harvey (1986) noted that since the primary business of the modern office is to collect, record, sort, analyze, store and distribute information, office information system (OIS) integrates all available hardware, software procedures and human resources so that office information is not only processed

accurately, speedily and comprehensively by also made available when, where and in the manner required. Today, computers as well as other technological aids play very important roles in the effective discharge of business functions. Information is required for a business to function effectively, and to highlight performance of the different units of the business and to direct attention to areas requiring review. Most information required for management purposes are either available in a form on which they can be readily used or they exists in the form of raw data. According to Ejeka (2006), the automated office functions effectively and efficiently with little or no stress at all. Office automation reduces the drudgery, which often accompanied doing repetitive tasks such as typing numerous memoranda, filing and copying. This creates time for the secretary to be creative and also increases productivity.

Office automation has been defined by many authors. Geoffrey (2003) defined office automation as an aid to the secretary who makes constant use of the machines, hence the machines can carry out routine work or clerical jobs quickly, accurately and automatically more than the ordinary human being can do, thereby freeing the secretary in working out payroll, and other numerous letters and calculations which need an expert and excellent touch to be done correctly. Some of these machines have large storage facilities and can store information in their memory unit. He confirmed that the presence of computer as an office automation has created new job opportunities especially for the secretarial assistant. Ejeka (2015) also opined that office automation refers to utilizing personal computer such as work processors and electronic intercom mail and other technologies to upgrade productivity and efficiency. It is the technique of making a processor system automatic in the office. Ejeka went further to assert that office automation is the merging of technologies and integration of providing quality information and communication facilities designed to improve professional and management productivity.

Office automation refers to all processes that integrate computer and communication technology with the traditional manual processes. Mechanization of office work has come as a result of the need for great speed and accuracy. The characteristics picture of modern office in efficiency is the successful integration of the use of machines and equipment into what is called 'system". Abang (2009) reported that secretaries have vital roles to play in enhancing the attainment of organizational goals. Though secretaries of nowadays would not necessarily be expected to understand as much about the business in hand as their executives, they are increasingly being expected to have some understanding of the significance and effective management of the correspondence, reports and instructions which normally pass through their desks. The trained secretaries with the state of the art materials and equipment are expected to be gainfully employed in the labour markets or even create jobs and become self-reliant despite the present hardship in the Nigerian economy. According to Esene (2012) the modern offices of today, lay due emphasis on paperless office as a way of facilitating the process of correspondence handling and operation. Ekula (2010) stated that in offices, computer, database management and other accessories are increasingly being used to organize and control records. Secretaries are now being required to be able to operate computer using Dbase, Excel, Corel Draw and Word processing package such as word perfect, MS word, power point, adobe page maker and in particular the dexterity to use most of the application packages contained in windows 2000 to 2007 respectively. The author further expressed that the OTM staff effectiveness cannot only achieve in a day but required some tasks in form of strategies which include purchasing appropriate software, creation of awareness to the OTM staff on the need for the adoption of office automation, availability of computer for practical session and making sure that follow-up are put in place to determine whether OTM staff are actually practice what they actually trained for.

Furthermore, Esene (2012) stated that computer internet is now being used to send and retrieve information from any part of the world with relative ease. Office automation has taken over the entire activities of very many organizations. Various electronic equipment such as computer, electronic typewriters, photocopiers, tele-printers fax recorders, telephones with cellular, GSM/Mobile attachments, electronic switch boards, laminating machines, scanners, distaphones, magnetics and non-magnetic tapes etc. are used to speed up the processing of correspondence, but not to replace the secretarial functions of the secretaries (Ekula, 2010). Perhaps, it must be stated very clearly that all the demand special skills on the part of the secretarial personnel to operate them proficiently. Really, automation carries with it good mission for secretaries, for bringing about increased mechanization of office activities and services. This has gone a step further to make the impact of secretaries felt in the world of business. The quality can be regarded as a grade of achievement, standard against which to compare certain things by means of

judgment. According to Esene (2012) quality is usually seen as the degree of excellence in terms of passing judgment on the level of value in a product (graduate).

Assurance refers to promises by one or more agencies that the degree of level of value of service will produce good results usually all the time. Using these two terms, quality assurance is defined as a plan and systematic activities implemented in the quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled. It is a systematic assessment, measurement and evaluation by making objective comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated look that confers error prevention. If quality assurance is maintained in the application of new technologies, it has the capability to enhance communication and critical thinking skill, develop lifelong learning behaviour and facilitates students' involvement in ways that increase a deeper understanding of course contents (Abimbola, 2014). Onocha (2002) opines that quality is the minimum standard for education and it requires the establishment of a set of quality assurance indicators, measuring instruments and time-frame for measurement. He is also of the view that in order to have quality assurance in education, there is need for quality learners, quality learning environment, quality teaching and quality outcomes. Quality assurance on the other hand, is about consistently meeting product specification or getting things right first time, every time. Quality assurance implies the ability of the institutions to meet the expectations of the users of manpower in relation to quality of skills acquired by their outputs (Ajayi and Akindutire, 2007).

Statement of the Problem
It is not clear what effect office automation has on Office Technology and Management (OTM) staff. While the impression is that the introduction of automation in business organizations appears to be a blessing to its users, the Office Technology and Management (OTM) staff who have not up-dated their skills fear that it would replace them. If an automated office would effectively replace the secretary, how soon would that happen? The world is undergoing a rapid change due to the innovation of office automation. The effects of these changes on the productivity of secretary in the office, her ability to cope, her job security, her relevance to the office work for which she is employed and moreover, the training which is to prepare her to meet the challenges of her ever-changing work environment constitute the basis for carrying out this study.

Purpose of the Study
The main purpose of this study is to make an investigation into office automation as a tool for quality assurance in work delivery. Specifically, the study was aimed at identifying the following:
1. To examine the importance of quality assurance to office technology and management staff effectiveness?
2. To examine the strategies for proper adoption of office automation for office technology and management staff?

Research Questions
In carrying out this study, the following research questions were raised to guide the researcher:
1. What are the importance's of quality assurance to office technology and management staff effectiveness?
2. What are the strategies for adoption of office automation for office technology and management staff service delivery effectiveness?

Methodology
Descriptive survey design was adopted. The population of the study comprised a total of 360 office technology and management graduates from public and private organization in Oyo State, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 108 graduates of office technology and management selected the stratified random sampling method. A structured questionnaire was constructed to collect data for the study. The instrument was subjected to both face and content validated by three experts comprising one senior lecturer from test and measurement unit and two from Department of Business Education in Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo. Test re-test method was used to determine the reliability coefficients of 0.85. Respondents' opinions were obtained using 5-point likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) for 5 points, Agree (A) for 4 points, Strongly disagree (SD) for 3 points, Disagree (D) for 2 points, neutral for 1 point.

Resiults

Research Question 1: What is the importance of quality assurance to office technology and management technology staff for job effectiveness?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on Quality assurance in OTM is to improve the job effectiveness of the secretaries

S/N	Quality assurance is important because it:	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Makes OTM staff to do satisfactory work	2.50	0.75	Agreed
2.	Reduces laziness among the OTM staff	3.21	0.72	Agreed
3.	Encourages cooperation among in the place of work	2.80	0.88	Agreed
4.	Encourages timely completion of work among the OTM staff	3.00	0.82	Agreed
5.	Enhances quality of work	2.74	0.74	Agreed
6.	Brings easiness to the dissemination of work by OTM staff	2.72	0.86	Agreed
7.	Reduces boredom among the OTM staff	2.58	0.76	Agreed
8.	Increases speed and accuracy of OTM staff in the work delivery	2.69	0.82	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The results in Table 1 indicated that all the respondents agreed with all the 8 items that the quality assurance is importance to office technology and management staff effectiveness.

Research Question 2: What are the strategies for adoption of office automation for office technology and management staff service delivery effectiveness?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the strategies for adoption of office automation for OTM staff service delivery effectiveness

S/N	Strategies include	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Encouraging OTM staff on the need to embrace office automation	2.60	0.75	Agreed
2.	Provision of appropriate OTM software	3.20	0.76	Agreed
3.	Provision of conducive environment for the staff training	2.70	0.81	Agreed
4.	Practical workshop session to consolidate theoretical aspect of training	2.50	0.68	Agreed
5.	Attachment of incentives for the time taking in the course of training	2.64	0.73	Agreed
6.	Purchasing of computer to the OTM staff	2.73	0.76	Agreed
7.	Purchasing of related software for the OTM staff	2.59	0.66	Agreed
8.	Conduct follow-up to determine the level of OTM compliance in the adoption of office automation	2.79	0.83	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The results in Table 2 indicated that all the respondents agreed with all the 8 items that the strategies for adoption of office automation for office technology and management staff service delivery effectiveness.

Discussion

The data presented in Table 1 provided answers to question one by agreeing that the quality assurance is importance to office technology and management staff effectiveness. This indicated that quality insurance is very importance to the attainment of organizational goals. The finding agreed with Doswell (1990) that office automation is a conglomerate of all the separate office information processing technologies which include: word processing, data processing, micrographics, reprographics and telecommunication. Therefore all these are used by the secretary to increase the job performance and efficiency of secretaries in the organizations. With this, it can be deduced that office automation cannot take the place of the secretary but rather as something that can improve the efficiency and productivity hereby making them carry out their official duties with ease. The finding was in line with Ejeka (2015 who views that office automation enables secretaries to make additional and meaningful contributions to office tasks that led to the efficiency, effective and high productivity of their output in any organization.

The results of Table 2 found that all the strategies mentioned are appropriate ways to adopt office automation in any organization. This findings is corroborated with earlier findings of Ekula (2010) who

stated that the OTM staff effectiveness cannot only achieve in a day but required some tasks in form of strategies which include purchasing appropriate software, creation of awareness to the OTM staff on the need for the adoption of office automation, availability of computer for practical session and making sure that follow-up are put in place to determine whether OTM staff are actually practice what they actually trained for.

Conclusion

The office technology and management (OTM) programme is designed to enable Nigeria join the rest of the developed countries in advancing organizational development. This programme is introduced into Business Education curriculum in the tertiary institutions in order to enable graduates to compete with their counterparts all over the world. The office technology and management (OTM) curriculum has significantly improved in content and in pedagogy by the inclusion of courses in computer, database management, ICT applications management and secretarial office practice, vocational skills and contemporary courses. All these are designed to enable secretaries to operate the computer using Dbase, Excel, Corel draw and Word processing package such as word perfect, MS Word, MS power point, Adobe etc. The globalized world is not static, things are changing every day. Therefore OTM graduates also need to be dynamic and globally competitive.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:
1. All tertiary institutions in Nigeria that offer Office Technology and Management should lay more emphasis on the use of automated devices.
2. Secretaries should not entertain fear that an automated device will displace them but rather, they should see it as something which has come to assist them to do their jobs in order to improve their efficiency and productivity.
3. Secretaries should see office automation as a challenge and prepare themselves towards facing it by going for training in order to protect their jobs as this will make them to be relevant in the world of work.
4. Internet facilities should be installed in all the offices for all secretaries so as to ensure quick dissemination of information and timely accomplishment of tasks.
5. Finally, modern machines and equipment should be procured by various organizations so as to enhance quality delivery of work.

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